

SEMINAR OUTLINES

QUIETING A NOISY SOUL

OVERCOMING GUILT, ANXIETY,
ANGER, AND DESPAIR

JIM BERG

NOTICE

Please download and read the Quieting a Noisy Soul Leader's Guide at www.QuietingANoisySoul.com before duplicating or using the seminar handouts contained in this file.

SEMINAR OUTLINE BULLETIN INSERTS

Leaders who wish to use the seminar in a group setting can profit from the outlines on the following pages. They are truncated versions of the seminar outlines in the interactive study guide *Taking Time to Quiet Your Soul*. The outlines are prepared in bulletin insert size (half a sheet of regular copy paper).

- They may be duplicated without charge as long as they are not changed in any way.
- If they are published as a booklet, the booklet must include the prepared front and back covers included with these inserts.

The above stipulations guarantee that every time a user holds an outline in his hand he also has the reminder of the message that viewing the seminar sessions merely shows him the map; it is not the journey. The leader's guide explains why this is important to the integrity of the program.

PART ONE: THE WAY DOWN

Session 1—Noticing the Noise in Your Soul (Matthew 11:28–30)

Introduction: Noise is produced by creating a disturbance.

1. Noise in the physical realm consists of waves.
2. Noise in the soul consists of thoughts.

A. What Does Noise in the Soul Sound Like?

1. Matthew 11:28–30
 - a. Beaten down—*labor*: weariness; take a beating
 - b. Burdened down—*heavy laden*: heavily loaded ship
2. What noises disturb your soul, robbing it of rest/peace?
 - a. Sounds of anxiety and fear
 - b. Sounds of discouragement and despair
 - c. Sounds of anger and frustration
 - d. Sounds of bitterness and hatred
 - e. Sounds of lust and greed
 - f. Sounds of guilt and shame
 - g. Sounds of possessions and positions
 - h. Sounds of obsessions and addictions
 - i. Sounds of entertainment and recreation
 - The collective noise of all of these sounds is deafening! How different from the Master's desire for us, His disciples (John 14:27).

B. What Are the Dangers of Noise in the Soul?

1. Physically—A noisy soul promotes the destruction of the body.
2. Spiritually—A noisy soul reflects alienation from God.

C. What Is God's Cure for Noise in the Soul?—Matthew 11:28–30

1. Come to Me! (Matthew 11:28)
2. Come and be like Me! (Matthew 11:29)
 - a. Be willing to be governed—"meek."
 - b. Be willing to be humble—"lowly in heart."

Conclusion: You must come to Christ and purpose to be like Him to quiet the noise in your soul.

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Session 2—Unmasking the Source of Your Noise (II Peter 1:2–3)

A. The Nature of Truth

1. Some things every man understands to be true through creation and his own conscience (Romans 1:18–21, 25, 28, 32).
2. Definition: Truth is that which corresponds to reality.
3. Corollary: Nothing can be true and untrue at the same time.
4. Corollary: Nothing can exist and not exist at the same time.

B. The Danger of Unbelief

1. Definition: A belief is what you accept to be true.
2. Definition: Unbelief is rejecting what God says is true.
3. You must labor to find out what is true according to God, resolutely reject any deviation from it, and cling to the things that are true about God no matter what is happening to you.

C. The Glory of God

1. Unbelief robs God of His glory (Romans 1:21). His unique excellence is tarnished in our view. He becomes in our mind no better than the creatures He made—weak, untrustworthy, unloving, unkind, and unwise.
2. The temptation of the sinful heart is to “[exchange] the truth of God [for] a lie” (Romans 1:25).

D. Stabilizing Truths for Noisy Souls: The Knowledge of God

- Print out a copy of the Stabilizing Truths for Noisy Souls from <http://www.QuietingANoisySoul.com/downloads/memory-cards.pdf>
- Labor, labor, labor to know these truths—look up the above verses and find other verses that teach these truths. Memorize these truths and verses that support them (Psalm 119:9–11). Meditate upon these truths (I Timothy 4:15–16). Fellowship with others about these truths (I John 1:3). Test every stray thought of your heart by these truths (II Corinthians 10:3–5). Don’t despise preaching about these truths (II Timothy 4:2–4).
- To reject them is to believe a lie.

Conclusion: Unbelief is the primary cause of the noise in your soul. You do not yet see that God Himself is more than enough for you.

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Session 3—Understanding the Solution (II Corinthians 4:16–18)

- A mind renewed by the Spirit of God with the truth of God is the only antidote for guilt, anxiety, anger, and despair. It is the only cure for a noisy soul.

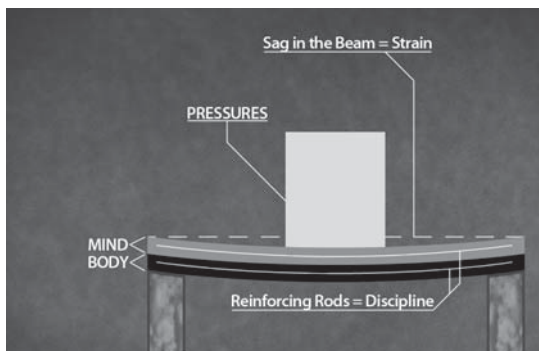


Figure 1

A. Understanding Pressure and Strain

1. Pressure is first evaluated by the mind.
2. Persistent anxiety has negative effects (strain) on the body.
3. A disciplined mind and body have greater ability to withstand pressure with fewer debilitating effects on either the mind or the body (like concrete reinforced with steel rods—see Figure 1).

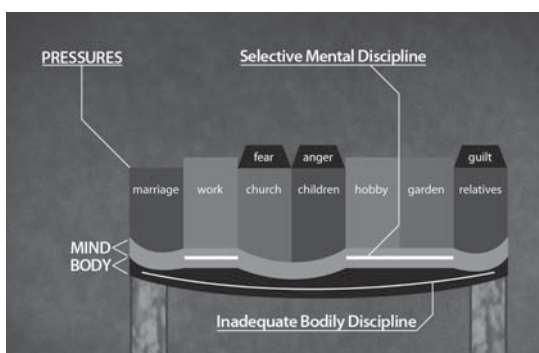


Figure 2

4. God, however, never intended for man to be able to handle the pressures of life on his own—see Figure 2.

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B. Handling Pressure Biblically

1. Eliminate the pressures God does not intend for you to bear.
2. Reinforce the beams so they will withstand the weight of the pressures you bear in the will of God.

C. The Result—A Different Way of Looking at Life and Its Pressures

- A renewed mind possesses a Bible-taught and Spirit-illuminated belief that God is more than enough for me. See Figure 3.

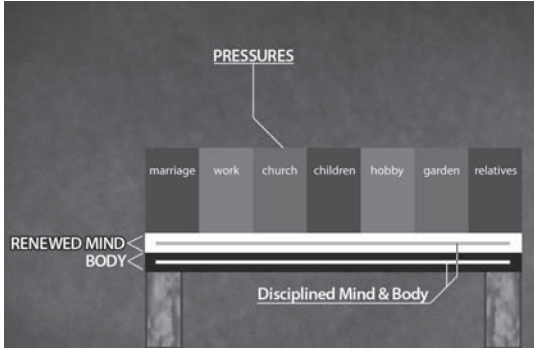


Figure 3

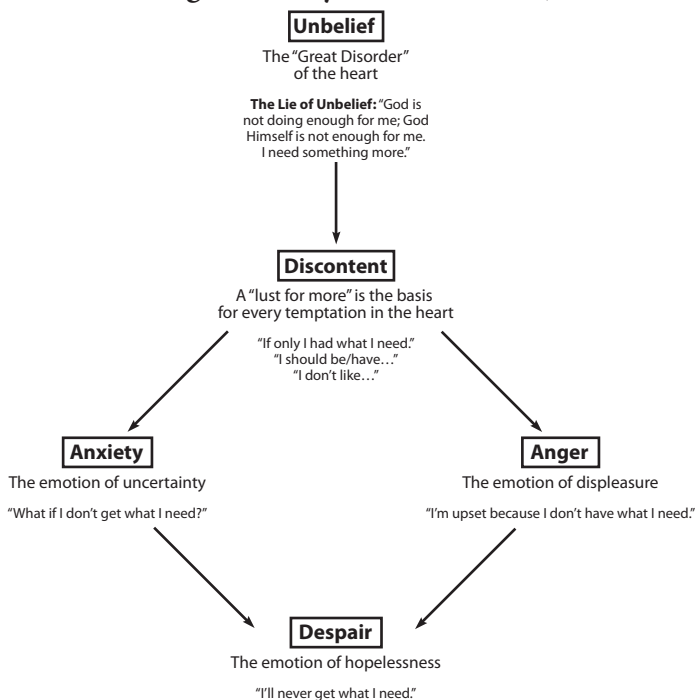
Conclusion: You must spend much time beholding God if you are to have a renewed mind—and, thus, a quiet soul.

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Session 4—Tracking “The Way Down,” Part 1 (Romans 1:21)



A. Unbelief—“The Great Disorder” of the Heart

- Unbelief is a “dis-order” because it accepts the reasonings of fallen man (“vain imaginations”) over the revelation of God.
- The lie—the fantasy—of “The Great Disorder” is that “God is not doing enough for me; God Himself is not enough for me. I need something more.”

B. Discontent

- Discontent is the dissatisfaction of not having what we have decided we need.
- Begin a list of your own “if onlys,” “I shoulds,” and “I don’t likes.”
- Legitimate concerns should be turned into prayer while surrendering the results to God.

Conclusion: Learn to look for the roots of unbelief and discontent when you see the fruit of guilt, anxiety, anger, and despair.

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Session 5—Tracking “The Way Down,” Part 2 (Romans 1:21)

Session 4—Tracking “The Way Down,” Part 1 (review)

A. Unbelief—“The Great Disorder” of the Heart

B. Discontent

C. Anxiety

- Anxiety is a subset of fear—the emotion of uncertainty.
- Worriers meditate upon possibilities (uncertainties) instead of certainties.
- Worriers meditate upon impossibilities instead of certainties.
- Worriers are masters at meditation.
- Worry is the root cause of the “anxiety disorders” today (panic attacks, obsessive thinking, compulsive behavior, anorexia, bulimia, generalized anxiety, phobias, self-mutilation) and many sleep disorders.
- Worry is the root cause of many physical problems.
- Anxiety is the fear that I will not get what I need or want. It is driven by unbelief and discontent. This is why anxiety is always portrayed in the Bible as a spiritual problem: “God is not enough for me; I need something more, and I’m afraid I won’t get it.”

D. Anger

- Anger is a strong emotion of displeasure. It says, “I don’t like what is going on” or “I don’t have what I need, and I’m upset.”
- The three main causes of displeasure are frustration, hurt, and fear.

E. Despair

- Despair (psychological depression) exists when a person sorrows about his losses in life without any hope. The hopelessness is often laced with self-pity, making the condition even more toxic to the person’s emotional state.
- Feeling down is not sinful and can be caused by bodily conditions, but thinking hopeless thoughts is entirely a matter of the heart and is an indication of spiritual needs.

Conclusion: “The Way Back” and “The Way Out” become clear as you learn “The Way Down.”

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PART TWO: THE WAY BACK

Session 6—Finding That God Is More Than Enough (Philippians 4:11, 13)

A. The Excellency of Contentment

1. Consider Paul's teaching (1 Timothy 6:6).
2. Consider Paul's testimony (Philippians 4:10–32).

B. The Essence of Contentment

1. The definition of Christian contentment
2. The distinction of Christian contentment
 - a. It is not a passive resignation. You don't talk yourself into this frame of mind by human logic; you submit yourself into it by affirming divine truth.
 - b. It is not a passive personality.
3. The doctrinal foundation of Christian contentment
 - a. The doctrine: "God is more than enough"—the sufficiency of God.
 - b. It is inconceivable to a thoughtful and surrendered Christian that he should ever lack anything for his present happiness.
 - c. Discontent means we have abandoned a biblical view of God: absolute sufficiency.
 - d. Discontent means we have abandoned a biblical response to God: absolute surrender.
 - e. As we saw in "The Way Down," discontent is rooted in unbelief: "God has not done enough for me; God Himself is not enough for me. I need something more."

C. The Enemy of Contentment (Hebrews 13:5)

1. Covetousness: "Who God is does not satisfy me; what He has supplied does not satisfy me. I must have something more."
2. The root of covetousness is unbelief!
3. If God is the biggest thing in your life, you don't need anything else, nor do you want it. He is more than enough.
4. If God is not enough to satisfy you, then nothing will be enough for you!

Conclusion: You must know God well enough to be satisfied that He Himself is enough for you.

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Session 7—Beholding the God of Love (Romans 8:31–32, 37)

- No man can have a genuinely God-taught contentment about his life who has not seen the love of God for him.
- A. The Essence of God’s Love (What is it?)**
1. Love is a subset of God’s goodness.
 - a. That God is good means that God is excellent.
 - b. That God is good means that God is benevolent.
 - Psalm 145:1–3, 9, 15–16; 33:1–5; 107:1–2, 8, 15, 21, 31, 42–43
 2. God’s love is His personal communication to a rational creature of His benevolence by giving Himself for the highest good of that creature. Love is a self-sacrificing choice to meet the genuine needs of another.
 3. We must meditate upon these truths and “argue ourselves back to reality.” We start on “The Way Down” when we listen to ourselves when we should be talking to ourselves.
- B. The Extent of God’s Love (How vast is it?)**
1. You cannot do anything that will cause Him to love you more.
 2. You cannot do anything that will cause Him to love you less.
- C. The Evidence of God’s Love (How do I know He loves me?)**
- The most notable expression of God’s goodness is Calvary.
- D. The Effect of God’s Love (What difference does it make?)**
1. Banishes our fears (Matthew 6:24–34; I John 4:16–18)
 2. Compels us to love others (I John 4:7–11)
 3. Makes us energetic and evangelistic (II Corinthians 5:14–15)
 4. Inspires true worship (Revelation 5:9–14)

Conclusion: My soul can rest because God’s love is more than enough for me.

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Session 8—Beholding the God of Mercy (Ephesians 2:4–5)

- Definition of mercy—“Rescuing someone from his or her miserable condition.”
 - Not all “miserable conditions” are created equal; God has priorities about miserable conditions.
- A. Our Miserable Condition (Ephesians 2:1–3)**
- Illustration: Old Yeller (rabid dog)
 1. Under a death sentence (Ephesians 2:1)
 2. Controlled by a hostile force (Ephesians 2:2)
 3. Contaminated in every part (Ephesians 2:3)
- B. God’s Merciful Intervention (Ephesians 2:4–10)**
1. God takes pleasure in rescuing us (“rich in mercy”).
 2. God has a plan to rescue us.
 - a. He changes the decision against us.
 - b. He changes the disposition within us.
 - c. He changes the destiny of our soul.
- C. Some Implications**
1. He rescued us from our miserable condition to show the greatness of His goodness.
 2. He rescued us from our miserable condition to make us useful.
 3. He rescued us from our miserable condition so that we would rescue others from their miserable condition.
 - a. Are you confronting the lost with the gospel?
 - b. Are you confronting the sinning believer with his sin?
 - c. Are you comforting those who suffer physically or emotionally?

Conclusion: My soul can rest because God’s mercy is more than enough for me.

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Session 9—Beholding the God of Faithfulness (Lamentations 3:21–26)

A. What Does It Mean That God Is Faithful?

1. Faithfulness is a subset of “immutability”—unchangeable.
2. Scriptural testimony (Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 102:25–27; Numbers 23:19; Malachi 3:6; James 1:17)
3. To change in any way would mean that God would have to change for the better (already absolutely perfect) or for the worse (not possible with absolute perfection).

B. What Makes God So Unchangeable?

1. God is unchangeable because He is the Self-existent One.
 - God is free from all causes.
2. God is unchangeable because He is the Infinite One.
 - God is free from all limitations.

C. Why Does It Matter That God Is Faithful?

1. Without a clear view of His faithfulness you will have little testimony for God.
 - a. You will be plagued by sins you cannot overcome (I Corinthians 10:13; I Thessalonians 5:24; II Thessalonians 3:3).
 - b. You may be unsure of your salvation and of forgiveness of sins (I John 1:9).
 - c. You can be easily discouraged by loneliness (Hebrews 13:5).
 - d. You can be easily discouraged by your own failures (II Timothy 2:13).
 - e. You can be tortured by fear of what is going to happen (Psalm 121:8).
2. Without a clear view of His faithfulness you will have little trust in God.
 - a. His promises will have little impact upon you.
 - b. Your prayer life will have little impact upon anything.

Conclusion: My soul can rest because God’s faithfulness is more than enough for me.

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Session 10—Beholding the God of Power (I Chronicles 29:11–13)

A. That God has all power means that He possesses absolute might.

1. Omnipotence: “God is able to do whatever He wills in the way He wills it.”
 - NT word is *dunamis*—“power, ability, physical or moral, as residing in a person or thing”
2. It means “He is able.” (II Corinthians 9:8; Ephesians 3:20; Romans 4:20–21; II Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25; Jude 24)
3. His power in creation (Isaiah 40:12; Genesis 1; Psalm 33:6–9; Job 38–42)
4. His power in preservation (Hebrews 11:1–3; Colossians 1:16–17; Isaiah 40:26)
5. His power in government (Romans 13:1–2; Psalm 75:5–7; Isaiah 40:23–24)

B. That God has all power means that He possesses absolute right.

1. NT word is *exousia*—“denotes freedom of action, right to act; used of God, it is absolute, unrestricted; used of men, authority is delegated”
2. God’s control is absolute.
3. God’s control is not always apparent.
 - “He permits, for reasons known only to Himself, people to act contrary to and in defiance of His revealed will. But He never permits them to act contrary to His sovereign will.”
 - Deuteronomy 10:17; I Chronicles 29:11–12; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 22:28; 103:19; 115:3; Isaiah 14:27; 43:13; Jeremiah 27:5; Revelation 19:6

Conclusion: My soul can rest because God’s power is more than enough for me.

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Session 11—Beholding the God of Wisdom (Romans 11:33)

A. How Much Does God Know?

1. God's knowledge is infinite (omniscience).
 - Psalm 139:1–6; Daniel 2:22; Ezekiel 11:5
 - a. It is, therefore, intuitive.
 - 1) God does not learn anything.
 - 2) God does not deliberate about anything.
 - b. It is, therefore, infallible.
 - 1) God never gets wrong information.
 - 2) God never needs more information.
 - c. The only proper responses to this kind of knowledge are wonder (Psalm 139:6) and worship (Revelation 15:3–4; 16:5–7; 19:1)
2. God's knowledge is incomprehensible.
 - a. We often cannot understand why (Hebrews 12:11; Romans 8:28–29)
 - b. We are called upon, rather, to understand Who.

B. What Is Wisdom?

1. Wisdom is knowing and choosing the best means to the best end.
2. Wisdom must choose upon the knowledge of the facts.
3. Wisdom must choose upon the knowledge of correct values.
 - No decision is wise that is not morally and ethically good and benevolent.
4. “With the goodness of God to desire our highest welfare, the wisdom of God to plan it, and the power of God to achieve it, what do we lack? Surely we are the most favored of all creatures.”

Conclusion: My soul can rest because God's wisdom is more than enough for me.

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PART THREE: THE WAY OUT

Session 12—Identifying Your Loudest Noisemaker (Psalm 38:2, 4, 6, 8)

- The loudest noises in the soul are the agitations of a guilty conscience!
Psalm 32:1–4; 38:1–10

A. The Function of the Conscience

1. How alarm systems work

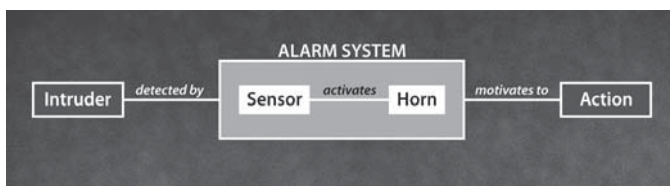


Figure 1

2. How our conscience (our internal alarm system) works

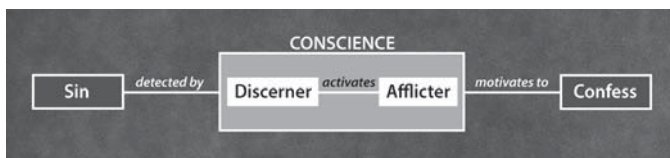


Figure 2

- a. The conscience judges our actions; it is a “discerner” (Romans 2:15; Psalm 51:3; I John 3:21; II Corinthians 1:12; Proverbs 20:27)
- b. The conscience makes us uncomfortable/miserable; it is an “afflicter” (Proverbs 28:1; John 8:9; Psalm 32:3–4; 38:2–10, 17).

B. The Adjustment of Our Conscience

1. The conscience is desensitized by repeated sinning and rationalization.
 - a. Scriptural teaching (I Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:15; Ephesians 4:19; Romans 1:21)
 - b. Just as the ability to feel pain at our fingertips is a God-given gift to preserve us from physical destruction, so is the conscience a God-given gift to preserve us from spiritual destruction. If you lose the sensitivity, you lose the protection.

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- c. Don't ignore the "moment-after effect" when you sin. The longer you wait, the more the mental justifications and diversions mask the noise of conscience, and your soul is unprotected.
2. The conscience is fine-tuned by repeated obedience to the Word (Hebrews 5:13–14; Romans 2:15; Psalm 119:9; 139:23–24).

Conclusion: The loudest noises in the soul are the agitations of a guilty conscience. "The Way Out" starts with confession and cleansing so that we can have "a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16).

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Session 13—Clearing Your Conscience with God (Psalm 51:1–4, 7)

A. Reject the Lie . . .

1. That we can disobey God without consequence—“thou shalt not surely die” (Galatians 6:7–8; Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 59:1–15).
2. That we can prosper without repentance—“contrite heart”; “God resisteth the proud.”
 - a. God grants forgiveness and grace (divine help) only to the humble and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17; I Peter 5:5).
 - b. Consider the lesson of Naaman: he had to humble himself before getting any relief from his affliction (II Kings 5).

B. Admit the Truth . . .

1. That we are guilty of unbelief.
 - a. We have forsaken God and His ways and have engineered our own schemes for handling life. This rejection of the truth is a flight into fantasy—unbelief (Isaiah 53:6; 55:7–9; Jeremiah 2:13).
 - b. We are also guilty of minimizing, covering, blame-shifting, and excuse-making.
2. That we need a blood sacrifice for cleansing (Psalm 51:2, 7; Hebrews 9:22; I John 1:7).

C. Apply the Gospel . . .

1. That Christ died for sinners (Romans 5:8; I Peter 2:24; 3:18).
2. That God delights to forgive sinners who repent (I John 1:9; I John 2:1–2).

D. Walk in the Light . . .

- Of our forgiveness.
 1. “I don’t feel forgiven.”
 2. “I don’t see how God can forgive what I’ve done.”
 - His infinite blood sacrifice cleanses from “all unrighteousness” (I John 1:9).
 3. “I’ll just keep failing anyway. What’s the use of asking forgiveness all the time?”

Conclusion: The loudest noises in the soul are the agitations of a guilty conscience. “The Way Out” starts with confession and cleansing so that we can have “a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16).

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Session 14—Dealing with Your Side of the Wedge (John 13:34–35)

- The offenses that divide one person from another can be best understood as a two-part wedge (Figure 1).

Steps to Seeking Forgiveness from Others

1. Since your sin is first against God when you wrong others, you must first ask God to forgive you for the wrong you have done to others (I John 1:9). Figure 2 shows the part of the wedge you must work on first—your own.

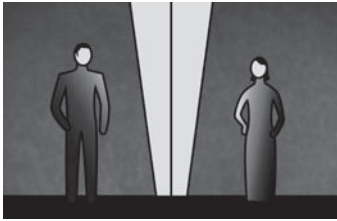


Figure 1

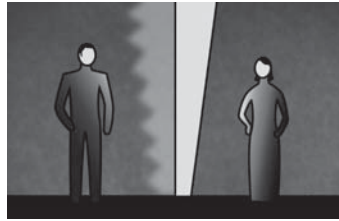


Figure 2

2. Confess the sin to the party you wronged and ask for forgiveness (Luke 15:18–19; Matthew 5:23–24).
3. Be willing to accept corrective measures.
 - a. Restitution (Luke 19:8)—You cannot remain in the state of having profited from your sin.
 - b. Restriction
 - c. Radical amputation
 - This may mean eliminating (i.e., radically amputating) friends with a negative influence; destroying sensual music recordings, television programming, and reading materials from the home; avoiding any time alone (particularly if an addiction is involved); changing a work schedule that keeps you away from home or church; destroying credit cards; canceling Internet access or a cable or satellite subscription (or removing the television altogether); and so forth.

Conclusion: The loudest noises in the soul are the agitations of a guilty conscience. “The Way Out” starts with confession and cleansing so that we can have “a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16).

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Session 15—Dealing with the Other Side of the Wedge (Ephesians 4:31–32)

- When somebody has wronged us, there is a God-honoring way to deal with the offense (his side of the wedge, Figure 3). He must be confronted about his offense so that he can ask forgiveness and so that you can grant it, thus restoring the relationship.

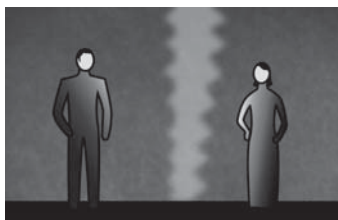


Figure 3

Steps to Granting Forgiveness to Others

1. Actions to take toward God
 - a. Surrender to God your assumed right to demand “payment” (Matthew 6:14–15; 18:21–35; Mark 11:25–26; Romans 12:17–20).
 - b. Pray for the offender’s good (Matthew 5:43–48; Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60).
2. Actions to take toward the offender
 - a. Feed your enemy while he is estranged (Romans 12:20–21; I Samuel 24:17).
 - b. Rebuke the offender in meekness.
 - Forgiveness removes the wedge entirely (Figure 4) but still may leave the parties at some distance.



Figure 4

- c. Rebuild the relationship so that brotherly love is the defining hallmark of the relationship (John 13:34–35).

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- Figure 5 shows a reconciled husband and wife. Not only have both parts of the wedge been removed, but the distance between them has also been removed, and the unity of Christlike love is now visible.



Figure 5

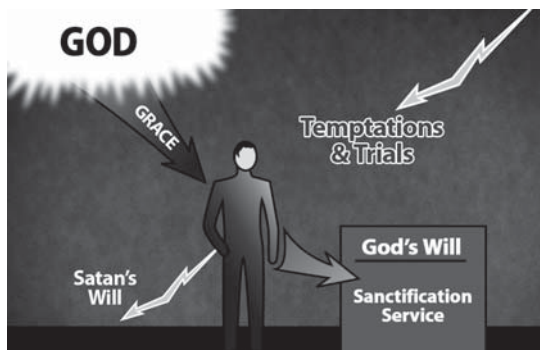
Conclusion: The loudest noises in the soul are the agitations of a guilty conscience. “The Way Out” starts with confession and cleansing so that we can have “a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16).

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Session 16—Qualifying for Divine Help (Hebrews 12:15–16; I Peter 5:5b)



A. What Is Grace?

- Grace is “divine enablement” or “help from God.”
- II Corinthians 9:8; I Corinthians 15:10; Philippians 2:13

B. Why Does God Give Grace? (Hebrews 12:15)

1. God gives grace to enable us to resist in times of temptation (Romans 5:20b).
2. God gives grace to enable us to rejoice and endure in times of trouble (II Corinthians 12:8–9).

C. What Happens When We “Fail the Grace of God”?

1. Bitterness—“Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled” (Hebrews 12:15).
2. Moral failure—“lest there be any fornicator” (Hebrews 12:16).
3. Temporal values—“or profane person, like Esau, who for one morsel of meat [a single meal] sold his birthright.”

D. How Do We Get Grace from God? (I Peter 5:5)

1. God resists the proud.
2. God gives grace to the humble.

Conclusion: Believers who are humbling themselves before God and others will be filled with the grace of God and will experience the desire and the power to do what is right. They will be filled with joy and peace, not discontent, anxiety, anger, and despair.

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Session 17—Overcoming Your Anxiety and Fear, Part 1 (Genesis 3:9–10)

A. Understanding the Nature of Your Emotions

1. Emotions are bodily sensations—feelings—triggered by changes in body chemistry.
 - a. Bodily disease and trauma change body chemistry and can affect “feelings.”
 - b. Ingested chemicals change body chemistry.
 - c. Behavior changes body chemistry (exercise, sleep, and diet).
 - d. Thoughts change body chemistry.
2. Emotions are like the warning lights on the dashboards of our cars; they indicate there is a problem “under the hood”—with our thoughts.
3. While thoughts of the heart change body chemistry—and therefore, feelings—no body chemistry generates thoughts. Thoughts always originate in the heart (Mark 7:21; II Corinthians 10:5; Hebrews 4:12).

B. Understanding the Source of Your Fear

1. Anxiety is a subset of the broader emotion of fear.
2. The emotion of fear is a result of the Fall.
3. Since the Fall, fear is helpful—and not sinful—when . . .
 - a. It serves as a caution to alert us to physical and spiritual danger.
 - b. It serves as a catalyst to motivate us to physical or spiritual readiness.
4. Fear is sinful—and not helpful—when in our unbelief we allow anxiety to stop us from fulfilling biblical responsibilities.
5. Anxiety is the result of responding to the uncertainties of life with a wrong view of God.

C. Reviewing the Path from Unbelief to Anxious Thoughts

1. Unbelieving thoughts—“God is not doing enough for me to feel safe; God Himself is not enough for me to feel safe. I need something more.”
2. Discontented thoughts—“If only I had/knew/could avoid/could get...”; “I should be/have...”; “I don’t like...”
3. Anxious thoughts—“What if...”

Conclusion: Our noisy souls will rest from negative emotions—including fear—when our choices and our thoughts reflect that we are living in the reality of a God Who is more than enough for us.

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Session 18—Overcoming Your Anxiety and Fear, Part 2 (Hebrews 4:9–11; Isaiah 41:10)

Session 17—Overcoming Your Anxiety and Fear, Part 1 (review)

- A. Understanding the Nature of Your Emotions**
- B. Understanding the Source of Your Fear**
- C. Reviewing the Path from Unbelief to Anxious Thoughts**
- D. Tracing the Path from Anxious Thoughts to Obsessive Thoughts**
 1. Obsessions are unrestrained doubts.
 - a. Doubts about health
 - b. Doubts about driving
 - c. Doubts about responsibilities
 - d. Doubts about physical safety
 - e. Doubts about situations out of your control
 - f. Doubts about your own self-control
 - g. Doubts about relationships
 - h. You scare yourself with your negative thoughts.
 2. Bizarre obsessions occur when common junk thoughts of the sinful nature—usually sexually perverse or violent thoughts—are processed through a heart that is full of doubts.
- E. Mishandling Anxiety with Controlling Behaviors**
 1. Perfectionistic Behaviors
 - a. Preoccupation with keeping physical appearances in order
 - b. Preoccupation with keeping surroundings in order
 - c. Preoccupation with keeping performance in order
 - d. Preoccupation with keeping schedules and responsibilities in order
 - e. Preoccupation with keeping spiritual disciplines in order
 - f. Preoccupation with keeping finances in control
 - g. Preoccupation with keeping health in control
 - h. Preoccupation with keeping relationships in order
 2. Compulsive Behaviors—ritualistic behaviors, destructive behaviors, and avoidance behaviors

Conclusion: We must be willing to let God sift our anxious thoughts and show us the evil of our unbelief.

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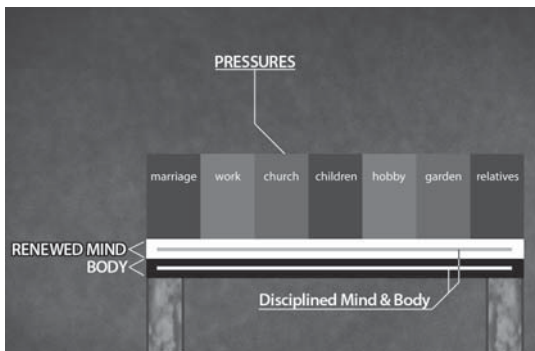
Session 19—Overcoming Your Anxiety and Fear, Part 3 (Philippians 4:4–9)

Sessions 17 & 18—Overcoming Your Anxiety and Fear, Parts 1–2
(review)

- A. Understanding the Nature of Your Emotions
- B. Understanding the Source of Your Fear
- C. Reviewing the Path from Unbelief to Anxious Thoughts
- D. Tracing the Path from Anxious Thoughts to Obsessive Thoughts
- E. Mishandling Anxiety with Controlling Behaviors
- F. The Biblical Solution to Anxiety

1. Guard Your Heart (Philippians 4:4–9)

- You must renew your mind about Who God is and what He has promised you in order to strengthen the top beam in Figure 3.
- a. Pray Right
 - 1) Prayer is a reality check.
 - 2) Prayer is a surrender check.



- b. Think Right

- 1) Identify your “enemy thoughts” of anxiety.
- 2) Reject your “enemy thoughts” of anxiety.
- 3) Replace your “enemy thoughts” of anxiety (memorize the truths and verses “Stabilizing Truths for Noisy Souls” found at <http://www.QuietingANoisySoul.com/downloads/memory-cards.pdf>)

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- c. Do Right
 - 1) Face your fears with God's help.
 - 2) Fulfill your responsibilities with God's help no matter how you feel.
2. Care for Your Body
 - The most important part of overcoming anxiety is guarding your thoughts—strengthening the “top beam.” But you can also significantly relieve the physical effects of pressures by strengthening the bottom beam—your body (i.e., eat right, exercise right, and rest right).

Conclusion: Growth in the knowledge of God is the only solution to anxious, fearful hearts. May God help you overcome your fear and anxiety as you increase in your knowledge of God!

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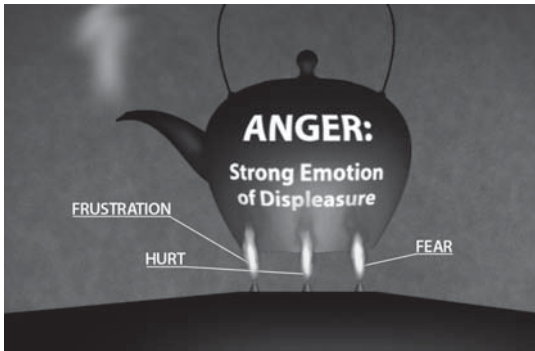
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Session 20—Overcoming Your Anger and Bitterness (Proverbs 25:28)

A. One-Word Descriptions of Anger

1. Displeasure—Anger is a strong emotion of displeasure.
2. Demand—Anger is a strong emotion that makes a demand that something change before we will be content.
3. Destroyer—Anger is a strong emotion that generates great energy for the purpose of changing or eliminating the person or circumstance that displeases us.
4. Distortion—Sinful anger causes distortion because it never sees the entire picture as God sees it, and, therefore, draws the wrong conclusions and responds in the wrong ways.



B. Common Causes of Anger (Numbers 20:1–9)

1. Frustration—the agitation that results from a thwarted goal
2. Hurt—the pain in the soul from personal mistreatment
3. Fear—the uncertainty of how things will turn out

C. Common Distortions Caused by Anger (Numbers 20:10–11)

1. Conversation is distorted—Moses is sarcastic with the people.
2. Concept of himself is distorted.
3. Concept of others is distorted.
4. Commands of God are distorted.

D. The Heart of the Issue (Numbers 20:12–13)—Unbelief

1. Unbelief sanctifies (spotlights or sets apart as special) something other than God.

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2. Unbelief fails to see God as the central component in the picture. It focuses on what displeases us instead of what displeases God.

E. Dealing with Anger

1. Confess the unbelief and selfish discontent exposed by the anger.
2. Do not allow the anger to continue since it is destructive.
3. Put out the fires that fuel the anger—frustration, hurt, and fear.

Conclusion: To overcome anger, you must put out the fires of frustration, hurt, and fear, which are fueled by an unbelieving heart, a heart that does not see God as more than enough.

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Session 21—Overcoming Your Despair and Discouragement, Part 1 (Proverbs 12:25)

A. The Nature of Sorrow

1. Sorrow is the emotion of loss. It is also called grief, pain (in the soul), and hurt.
2. It is the “groaning” that Paul talked about in Romans 8:22–23 and II Corinthians 5:4.
3. Losses over which we sorrow vary in intensity depending upon how much we valued the thing we lost.
4. Jesus experienced sorrow in the garden when He contemplated the coming loss of fellowship with His Father. He was not “depressed.”

B. The Nature of Despair

1. Despair is “sorrow without hope” (I Thessalonians 4:13); it is the emotion of hopelessness.
2. Hope is much more strategic in our immediate and long-term contentment than most people realize.
3. Sorrow without hope is intensified when laced with self-pity.
4. Sorrow without hope is further intensified when accompanied by blame-shifting.
5. Christians living in unbelief about the nature of God and unbelievers who don’t know God at all have no stable hope.

C. The Complication of Physical Illness

1. Physical disease and dysfunction can cause feelings of depression even if the patient is not entertaining hopeless thoughts of despair.
2. Physical disease and dysfunction can introduce many losses into a person’s life that further complicate his situation.

D. The Complication of Overload

- Adding to the normal losses of living on a sin-cursed planet are the pressures we create in modern society by overcommitment of our schedules and underdevelopment of our spiritual lives.
- Much of this overload is caused by the same discontent.

Conclusion: Once again, we are back where we started as we studied “The Way Down.” If you don’t have the view of God and relationship with Jesus Christ right, nothing can be right. Indeed, God is more than enough for us.

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Session 22—Overcoming Your Despair and Discouragement, Part 2 (Romans 15:4, 13)

*Session 21—Overcoming Your Despair and Discouragement, Part 1
(review)*

- A. The Nature of Sorrow**
- B. The Nature of Despair**
- C. The Complication of Physical Illness**
- D. The Complication of Overload**
- E. The Antidote to Despair**
 1. Despair starts when we lose something we value (Psalm 42:1–4).
 2. Despair (sorrowing without hope) is fueled by wrong thoughts during our loss.
 - a. Unchecked thoughts can lead to overwhelming feelings.
 - b. The psalmist talks to God (Psalm 42:1, 6–7).
 - c. The psalmist talks to himself (Psalm 42:5, 11).
 - 1) He rebukes himself (“Why art thou cast down, O my soul?”).
 - 2) He reminds himself that God is in this picture and has a disposition to help (vv. 5, 8, 11).
 3. Despair (sorrowing without hope) is complicated by wrong choices during our loss (indulging in lusts, spending spree, ignoring responsibilities, bingeing on food, considering suicide, using drugs or alcohol, indulging in reckless activity).

Conclusion: The psalmist of Psalm 42 gives us wonderful instruction for handling sorrow.

1. Objectively identify your loss.
2. Talk to the God of all hope.
3. Talk to yourself: rebuke yourself of wrong thinking and remind yourself of what God is like.
4. Wait for God’s deliverance in His time.

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Session 23—Overcoming Your Lust and Sinful Habits (Ephesians 2:1–3)

A. The Anatomy of a Lust

1. Lust as used in the Bible is any strong desire—good or bad.
 - a. “Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed” (James 1:14).
 - b. “We all had our conversation [lifestyle] in times past in the lusts of our flesh [sinful nature], fulfilling the desires of the flesh [body] and of the mind” (Ephesians 2:3).
2. Desires of the body—appetites we are born with (part of our human nature)
 - a. A limited number of bodily lusts—none of them in themselves are sinful—food, oxygen, sleep, sex after reaching puberty
 - b. These lusts are permanent and cannot be eliminated. They must be controlled (I Corinthians 9:27).
 - c. The flesh (sinful nature) can appeal to the body to fulfill these bodily cravings outside of God’s laws (wrong purpose, wrong time, wrong way).
 - d. Repeated indulgence in bodily cravings results in habituation.
3. Desires of the mind—appetites we learn (part of our personal nurture)
 - a. An unlimited number of learned lusts—do not necessarily have to be sinful
 - b. They are imprinted—learned (imprinted by repetition, concentration, and emotion).
 - c. These are the lusts spoken of in I John 2:15–17.
 - d. Desires of the mind are not permanent.
 - e. Desires of the mind must be restrained until they can be replaced.
 - f. Desires of the mind can be mixed with desires of the body.

B. Strategies for Change

1. Repent and begin forsaking the self-centeredness that lies at the core.
2. Expand your understanding of how biblical change takes place.
3. Make yourself accountable to your pastor or another mature Christian.
4. In the power of God’s Spirit, control the desires of your body . . . and resist the desires of your mind until they are replaced with godly responses.

Conclusion: While each generation may see new manifestations of old lusts, there are no new sins that are not addressed in the Scriptures.

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PART FOUR: THE WAY AHEAD

Session 24—Keeping Your Soul Quiet

A. Maintaining a Quiet Soul Requires a Savior (Matthew 11:28–30)

1. Any attempt to solve life's problems apart from Jesus Christ will result in failure.
2. Anything we turn to in order to make life work is another “savior”—a competing god.

B. Maintaining a Quiet Soul Requires Saturation—the Discipline of Meditation (James 1:21–25).

1. Requires concentration—“whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty.”
2. Requires continuation—“and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work”—until what you study is permanent and productive.

C. Maintaining a Quiet Soul Requires Structure (I Timothy 4:7b–8)

1. Godliness is intentional, not accidental.
2. We must do certain things on purpose—things that will promote godliness.
 - a. Paul's illustration in I Timothy 4:7 is from the “gymnasium.”
 - b. If you are going to “get in shape” physically, you must exercise—train yourself in certain disciplines.
 - c. If you are going to “get in shape” spiritually, you must exercise—train yourself in certain disciplines.
3. You must see how important routine is to anything productive—physically or spiritually.
 - a. Have a morning routine—get up at a prescribed time; meet the Lord; read; pray; meditate.
 - b. Have an evening routine—get to bed early enough to be refreshed when you meet the Lord in the morning (determine your bedtime by your morning requirement).
 - c. Have a weekend routine.
 - d. Have a ministry routine.
 - e. Have a checkup routine.
4. You must see that any kind of exercise requires subordination—I Corinthians 9:23–27.

Conclusion: To maintain a quiet soul, you must have a Savior, saturation, and structure.

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